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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. ELLMERS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 11, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RENEE ELLMERS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 2 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, yesterday, I joined members of the Pennsylvania State legislature, gun owners, and the president of the NRA at the Pennsylvania State capital in support of our Second Amendment rights. I appreciate their deep belief in freedom and protecting the Second Amendment that guarantees our citizens the right to own and bear arms. Our Second Amendment is

this country's original homeland security. Where this right is freely exercised without government infringement, our citizens live in freedom with a deterrent and defense to violent crimes.

Sadly, Second Amendment rights are under attack from within, most recently, the fast and furious scandal perpetrated by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives that approved felonious gun sales, directing thousands of illegally purchased firearms to be smuggled into Mexico as part of a sting operation. These actions contributed to the death of a U.S. border agent and perpetuate the lie that U.S. gun dealers supply the bulk of guns to criminal elements in Mexico.

As elected Representatives, it is our duty to respect and defend the freedoms that our Constitution guarantees. Those in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives that engineered this dangerous strategy that took a life and threatens our freedoms must be held accountable.

SUPPORT THE TROOPS BY BRINGING THEM HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the successful raid on Osama bin Laden's hideaway 10 days ago came with an important, and somewhat ironic, reminder. This mission was carried out in Pakistan where we are not at war and have no troop presence. Meanwhile, next door in Afghanistan, we continue to maintain an enormous military footprint of 100,000 or more troops. We're still there, even though Osama bin Laden hasn't been there since he escaped our grasp at Tora Bora nearly 10 years ago, and most of the al Qaeda leadership fled long ago.

The death of bin Laden clearly underscores the folly of our current policy. This is exactly the right moment to rethink our approach to Afghanistan and national security more generally, especially with the President's deadline for redeployment just 50 days from now in July.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, our military leaders don't seem to be rising to the moment. According to yesterday's Wall Street Journal, officers in Afghanistan have drawn up a plan that would withdraw 5,000 troops by July 1 and 5,000 more by the end of this year. Madam Speaker, that's not even close to an adequate response to the demands of the moment. It's not the bold move that was suggested when the July 1, 2011, drawdown date was first announced; 10,000 fewer troops by the end of the year doesn't even get us to pre-surge levels.

We owe it to the American people to do much, much more. They have sacrificed enough. What do we have to show for the 1,500-plus people we've lost and the nearly \$7 billion a month we continue to throw at this mission? If anything, we have emboldened the terrorists instead of defeating them. If anything, we've undermined our national security interests instead of advancing them. If anything, we've weakened America instead of strengthening it.

Americans see that Osama bin Laden is dead; that the military occupation of Afghanistan isn't accomplishing its goals; that we have urgent priorities right here at home. And they are quite rightly asking: Why do we still have boots on the ground in Afghanistan? We also owe it to the men and women who wear those boots to end this war. Our troops have served with honor and valor in Afghanistan. A deeply flawed and morally objectionable policy is not their fault, but they are bearing the untold burden that will not be easily lifted.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Earlier this week, USA Today reported on a new military study showing that troop morale is at an all-time low, thanks to the punishing emotional and psychological strain of multiple deployments and intense combat. The percentage of Army soldiers reporting acute stress has nearly tripled since the year 2005. Even if the war ended tomorrow, Madam Speaker, the anxiety and trauma plaguing so many of our troops won't go away anytime soon, if ever; but it's time to let the physical and mental health healing begin. It's time to stop sending our best and our bravest into this grinder.

We have asked enough of them. Madam Speaker, I can think of no better way to support our troops than to bring them home immediately.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 16. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki) during the One Hundred Twelfth Congress:

The Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE).

The Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS).

The Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. HURT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HURT. Madam Speaker, all across Virginia's Fifth District, people are suffering from skyrocketing fuel prices. As I have heard from families and small businesses and farmers who are seeing a negative impact on their bottom lines, we need to take action now if we are going to address this serious problem of skyrocketing fuel prices.

Instead of supporting policies that will help bring down the cost of gas, the Obama administration continues to actively block and delay domestic energy production, causing more pain at the pump, increasing our dependence on foreign oil, and destroying jobs. We only have to look at our soaring energy costs to see the consequences of these failed policies. Gas prices have doubled under the President's watch and are now hovering around \$4 per gallon in

Virginia; and as these rising prices continue to directly affect all central and southside Virginians and threaten our economic recovery, I believe we should take action now to address this crisis.

Last week, the House passed a bill that would expand American energy production and create jobs by reopening the oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Virginia that has been delayed or canceled by the Obama administration. It is estimated that offshore energy development in Virginia, which has bipartisan support, could lead to the production of more than half a billion barrels of oil and 2.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and create nearly 2,000 jobs for our State. At a time like this, there is no reason to leave these resources untouched when it will help provide relief to all Americans.

This week, we are continuing our work to maximize American energy production by considering two bills that will end the White House's de facto moratorium on new American offshore energy production in a safe, responsible, and transparent manner. By reversing the administration's anti-energy policies and tapping into these resources to maximize our domestic energy supply, we will take a significant step towards lowering gas prices, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and creating thousands of jobs for the Commonwealth and our Nation.

□ 1010

I urge support of H.R. 1229 and H.R. 1231 and hope that the Senate and the administration will join us in our efforts to move towards achieving true energy independence by approving all three energy bills the House of Representatives has considered thus far.

DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF NEW NUCLEAR REACTOR TECHNOLOGIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation I introduced to encourage the development of a vital component to the next generation of nuclear reactors that will provide clean, domestic energy solutions for all Americans.

The Department of Energy initiated the Nuclear Power 2010 Program in February 2002 as a joint public-private program to develop advanced reactor technologies and encourage the private sector to build new nuclear power plants in the United States. My legislation, the Nuclear Power 2021 Act, applies the Nuclear Power 2010 model to small modular reactors. Under the bill, the Department of Energy would be able to enter into public-private partnerships to design and license two small modular reactors by the year 2021.

As my colleagues may know, today's traditional larger reactors range from

1,000 to 1,700 megawatts and cost between \$5 billion and \$10 billion to construct. In contrast, small modular reactors generate 10 to 300 megawatts and cost about \$750 million to construct. These small reactors offer several advantages to large reactors in certain situations, including shorter construction times, increased safety controls, and electricity generation. While large reactors are built on a future generation site, a process that can take up to 5 years, smaller reactors can be manufactured in modular pieces in factories and transported by rail or truck, cutting construction times in half. Small reactors can also be completely manufactured and fueled in a factory. They can be sealed and shipped to the site for power generation, and after use, they can be shipped back to the factory for defueling, minimizing the potential spread of nuclear material.

Additionally, small modular reactors produce a small nuclear reaction which generates less heat, making them easier to shut down in the event of a malfunction. Another advantage of small modular reactors is that, unlike large reactors, they can generate power in any location. While large reactors require millions of gallons of water per day for cooling and must be located near large water sources, small reactors can be water-cooled or air-cooled. This technology could open up new parts of the country to nuclear development, such as the arid West and locations that cannot support larger capacity generation, such as isolated rural areas or regions with smaller grids.

Unfortunately, development and deployment of new nuclear reactor technologies can currently take upwards of two decades. Time and resources are limited for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to develop the institutional capacity to license new reactor designs, and traditional public-private partnerships are often insufficient to mitigate the business risk of bringing small modular reactors to market. This is why I believe this legislation is crucial for developing this all-American technology that could help us lead the world in electricity innovation and generation. I encourage my colleagues to join me in making America more energy independent, creating good-paying American jobs, and working toward the future of clean energy generation by cosponsoring the Nuclear Power 2021 Act.

HARVESTING AMERICAN ENERGY RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Madam Speaker, I am glad to be able to take the floor after the Member from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) talking about energy because it's something that's on everybody's mind today. He is talking